

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MANAGU 00131 101709Z
ACTION ARA-10

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S E C R E T MANAGUA 0131

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SHUM, EAID, NU
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SOMOZA CONCERNING HUMAN RIGHTS
AND IDB LOAN

REF: A. 76 STATE 288351, B. STATE 002742

1. DURING CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT SOMOZA AFTERNOON JANUARY 7, 1977, THE SUBSTANCE OF THE DEPARTMENT'S REFTEL A WAS COMMUNICATED TO HIM. COMPLETE BACKGROUND OF DEPARTMENT'S AFFIRMATIVE DECISION CONCERNING IDB \$15 MILLION AGRO-INDUSTRIAL LOAN WAS DISCUSSED, INCLUDING A RESTATEMENT OF U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY ON HUMAN RIGHTS, OUR STRONG COMMITMENT TO RESPECT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AND HUMAN DIGNITY, AND THE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE HARKIN AMENDMENT FOR NICARAGUA. SOMOZA WAS AGAIN TOLD THAT OUR MUTUAL INTERESTS BEST SERVED BY ADDITIONAL GON STEPS TO IMPROVE LOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE AND THE DESIRABILITY OF LIFTING THE STATE OF SIEGE AND CENSORSHIP.

2. PRESIDENT SOMOZA SAID THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON THIS MATTER HAD BEEN MADE PERFECTLY CLEAR. NONETHELESS, HE BELIEVED THAT THE GON HAD ACTED WITH CONSIDERABLE RESTRAINT IN DEALING WITH SANDINISTA VIOLENCE. BUT NOW THE WORST WAS OVER AND THE INTERNAL SECURITY SITUATION WAS UNDER CONTROL. SOMOZA SAID THAT HE WAS PLEASED TO NOTE THAT NICARAGUA WAS NOT CONSIDERED AMONGST THE WORST OFFENDERS ON HUMAN RIGHTS. HE ASSERTED THAT

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MANAGU 00131 101709Z

AMNESTY, SENATOR HUMPHREY AND OTHERS HAD RECENTLY ISSUED LISTS OF COUNTRIES ACCUSED OF GRAVE VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS BUT THAT NICARAGUA WAS NOT INCLUDED.

3. COMMENT: AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, WE HAVE MADE SEVERAL STRONG DEMARCHES TO PRESIDENT SOMOZA ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS. WE SHALL CONTINUE TO DO SO AS THE CIRCUMSTANCES

WARRANT. QUIET BILATERAL DIPLOMACY AND MORAL SUASION MAY POSSIBLY
HAVE HAD SOME EFFECT. FEWER ALLEGATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES
(DISAPPEARANCES, MISTREATMENT OF DETAINEES, ETC.) HAVE BEEN BROUGHT
TO EMBASSY ATTENTION IN RECENT MONTHS. HOWEVER, WE QUESTION THE
WISDOM AND EFICACY OF EFFORTS TO USE MULTILATERAL LENDING INSTITUTION
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SUCH AS THE IDB AS INSTRUMENTS OF COERCION ON HUMAN RIGHTS OR OTHER
ISSUES. PUNITIVE RESTRICTIONS ON MULTILATERAL AID, SUCH AS THOSE
EMBAODIED IN THE HARKIN AMENDMENT, INVARIABLY HAVE PROVEN TO BE
COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. NO GOVERNMENT CAN AFFORD TO BE PERCEIVED TO
BE BENDING TO US-INSPIRED EXTERNAL PRESSURE. THE TENDENCY IS
FOR THEM TO DIG IN THEIR HEELS. FURTHERMORE, THE LATIN COUNTRIES
WILL ALWAYS BE FOUND UNITED IN THEIR OPPOSITION TO THE UNITED STATES
WHEN THE HARKIN AMENDMENT IS INVOKED AGAINST A FELLOW IDB MEMBER
COUNTRY.

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